CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

State Route 67 Centerline Project – Frequently Asked Questions

Caltrans held an open house on December 7, 2016, to update the community of the status of the State Route 67 (SR-67) Centerline Project. The following are responses to the questions received.

1. *How does Caltrans make ultimate decisions on what improvements will be implemented in their projects? Why is Caltrans not installing a barrier that is strong enough to deter a car/truck from crossing the median on SR-67, from Lakeside to Shady Oaks Drive?*

Caltrans prepares a Project Study Report (PSR) to evaluate expected outcomes of infrastructure improvements. A Project Development Team (PDT) studies the impacts of these alternatives and then determines a preferred alternative. The PDT is led by a Project Manager and supported by the applicable technical experts in Design, Engineering, Environmental, Right of Way, Traffic Operations, Maintenance, and Construction.

To address safety concerns on SR-67, from Willow Road (PM 6.7) to Shady Oaks Drive (PM 19.0), four alternatives were originally considered: (1) Install Median Barrier by removing inside lanes, (2) Install Median Barrier on existing centerline, (3) Remove an inside lane and create a 12' median buffer, and a (4) No build alternative. The study of each alternative included a review of design concepts, environmental considerations, and right-of-way needs.

As part of this PSR, a Traffic Analysis Report (TAR) was conducted to evaluate operational impacts of each alternative. The TAR analyzed the existing year (2012), opening year (2018), and horizon year (2040) AM and PM peak hourly volumes by examining the operational impacts that each alternative would have on the route.

In addition, Caltrans completed a Community Impact Report (CIR). The CIR examined community and neighborhood impacts along the corridor as a result of the proposed alternatives. The PDT held community outreach meetings to present the project, the alternatives, and to document resident concerns. At a public scoping meeting, residents were shown each of the alternatives and provided the opportunity to submit comments by mail. Caltrans received the following concerns: out of direction travel, increased delays, blocked private driveways, reduced number of lanes, and the potential for other types of accidents as a result of installing a median barrier.

The PDT evaluated the results of the TAR and CIR, and concluded that the safety, operational, social, and environmental impacts created by a median barrier were significant and could not be mitigated.

The TAR study showed that travel times for both median barrier alternatives resulted in major delays because of the removal of an existing lane in the 3-and 4-lane segments of the project. The median barrier would limit access to, and result in out-of-direction travel for, approximately 140 driveways within the project limits, negatively impacting hundreds of residents. Other impacts include delaying

emergency response, in particular complicating natural disaster evacuations plans, as well as sight obstructions, and roadway drainage. Along with those impacts, median barriers in non-freeway locations have shown to increase the overall number of traffic collisions by about fifty percent.

As a result of this determination, the PDT developed a fifth alternative that visually enhances the centerline by installing surface mounted channelizer posts. This alternative allows for continued access throughout the corridor without blocking residential or business driveways, and creates no significant environmental impact. The channelizers are heavy duty flexible 3-foot tall yellow delineator plastic posts, 3-inches in diameter, with (2) 3-inch wide reflective horizontal bands each, that will be placed 6-feet center-to-center on curves, and 12-feet center-to-center on tangents.

Installing channelizers will provide an additional visual cue to alert drivers of the centerline, and preclude drivers from making illegal moves such as illegal U-turns. Channelizers will also maintain access to residential and business driveways located within the project, and allow emergency responders rapid access to both sides of the roadway.

2. If a barrier works in Lakeside on SR-67, why doesn't it work everywhere else on the route?

Caltrans installed concrete barrier on SR-67 in Lakeside because this segment of the route has four lanes and a median buffer area, making it wide enough to accommodate the space needed for the concrete barrier, and because there are a minimal number of residential driveways.

3. Why can't Caltrans widen SR-67 to a four lane highway with a median barrier?

The current SR-67 Centerline Project was initiated through the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) under the Two and Three Lane Cross Centerline Collision Monitoring Program in an effort to evaluate the feasibility of a median barrier on SR-67. Under this program, barriers may be installed if long term improvements such as adding lanes are not immediately viable. Improvements like passing lanes, adding lanes, upgrading to an expressway or freeway are not intended for this program. The program encourages implementation of incremental safety improvements that are designed to reduce cross centerline collisions.

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) takes the lead role in the region's transportation planning and funding of major projects. Future widening of SR-67 will be dependent on funding in the SANDAG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The 2050 RTP has identified widening of SR-67 from Mapleview Street to Dye Road as a phased project, from a 2/4 to 4-lane conventional highway, in the revenue-constrained plan. Additional information can be found at http://www.sandag.org/uploads/2050RTP/F2050rtp_all.pdf.

4. Why can't Caltrans create a frontage road adjacent to SR-67 combining driveways which currently feed to the highway? By reducing the number of

driveways, Caltrans should be able to minimize the impacts to private driveways and allow for the installation a concrete barrier on SR-67.

Although reducing the number of driveways will minimize the number of openings in the concrete barrier and allow emergency responders access to residents along the route, installing a median barrier would require the removal of an existing lane in the 3-and 4-lane segments of the project. The operation of the route would break down as concluded in the TAR, because the majority of the volume on SR-67 is not from drivers residing along SR-67. Placing a barrier would also change the route from a conventional highway to a divided highway, which would result in a speed limit increase to 65 mph.

5. Why can't Caltrans install median barrier on strategic areas of SR-67?

A median barrier alternative results in out of direction travel, increased delays, blocked private driveways, reduced number of lanes, and/or the potential for other types of accidents as a result of installing a median barrier.

After the feedback received from attendees at the SR-67 Centerline Project Open House on December 7, 2016, Caltrans is planning to make striping changes between Cloudy Moon Drive and 0.3 mile north of Archie Moore Road. These safety improvements include relocating the northbound lane drop south, from the curve to the tangent section, and adding a buffer separation for left turning vehicles from/to Archie Moore Road.

6. Why can't Caltrans install median barrier on the curves of SR-67 and channelizers of the tangent sections?

A median barrier cannot be installed on curves primarily because of the number of residential driveways at or in proximity of curves along this stretch of SR-67. A median barrier would limit access to driveways for residents, impede emergency responders and complicate natural disaster evacuations plans.

7. Will the proposed channelizer project prevent a vehicle from crossing the center divider?

The installation of the flexible channelizers along the median will not physically stop a vehicle from crossing the centerline. The SR-67 Centerline Project will provide safety enhancements along a 12.3-mile stretch of SR-67 that are expected to help reduce the frequency and severity of cross-centerline collisions. The majority of the cross-centerline collisions involved impaired drivers often under the influence of drugs or alcohol and/or excessive speed.

8. Why is installing channelizers costing $7 million?

The project was awarded to Hazard Construction Company on December 12, 2016, for $3.6 million. In addition to the centerline channelizers, this project includes other improvements such as: (1) Fixed

Changeable Message Signs (CMS) to alert drivers of traffic conditions, (2) Closed Circuit Television cameras at the CMS stations to aid in incident response during emergencies, (3) High Friction Surface Treatment at select locations that will allow motorists to maintain better control of vehicles in wet or dry conditions, (4) Installation of outside shoulder rumble strips to alert drivers moving outside of the lane, and, (5) Wider, 6-inch thermoplastic traffic stripe enhanced for wet night visibility throughout.

9. Will this project block access to my driveway SR-67?

This project will install raised channelizers along existing centerline, and allow for continued access at every driveway. Note that where there is a double parallel yellow stripe in the median, crossing is illegal (see California Motor Vehicle Code 21651).

10. Why is Caltrans installing shoulder rumble strips on SR-67? What is Caltrans doing to preserve bicycle safety on SR-67?

A shoulder rumble strip is applied along the direction of travel following the outside edge of travel way to alert drivers when they drift from their lane. Rumble strips are an effective strategy at reducing collisions due to inattention. Shoulder rumble strips are used primarily to reduce run-off-road collisions. In order to accommodate the bicycle community, this project will not deploy rumble strip where the outside shoulder is less than 4-feet. This project also uses Federal Highway Administration guidelines and will provide 12-foot bicycle gaps every 60-feet of edge-line rumble strip to permit riders to freely move between the lane and the shoulder should it become necessary.

11. What can Caltrans do to prevent hikers from parking on the shoulder of SR-67?

The California Vehicle Code (CVC) does allow for parking on a shoulder of a conventional highway. However, Caltrans has a process to perform a Traffic Investigation Report (TIR) to assess if parking in a particular area creates a safety hazard. Caltrans performed a TIR and deemed parking near driveways create site distance conflicts and has ordered “No Parking” signs to be installed near driveways along SR-67 at Heady Drive and Mount Woodson Road in Ramona. Additionally, the County of San Diego is in the process of developing parking for Potato Chip Rock Trail off of SR-67.

12. What can Caltrans do to lower speeds on SR-67?

Caltrans uses the CVC and the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) when establishing speed limits. In accordance with the California MUTCD, speed limits are established based on the majority of motorists’ actual speeds in free-flowing traffic.

Caltrans’ most recent speed studies indicated that a majority of motorists travel at speeds of 55 mph or greater along SR-67 between Willow Road and Shady Oaks Drive. As a result, Caltrans determined that the existing 55 mph speed limit should be maintained along this highway segment. Additionally, the CVC prohibits Caltrans from setting downward speed limits in areas that do not conform to the

California MUTCD, and defines such highway segments as "Speed Traps" where the posted speed limit would not be enforceable by law.

The centerline channelizers will create a soft barrier wall at 3-feet in height that should also slow traffic down. In contrast, a median barrier installation would increase the speed limit of SR-67 to 65 mph, as it would become a divided highway.

The CHP and Caltrans have also reached out to motorists travelling on SR-67 with two separate safety campaigns – "Arrive Alive" and "Take Care Getting There" – in an effort to increase public awareness.

13. Why is Caltrans installing CMS signs and CCTV cameras on SR-67?

Caltrans is installing Changeable Message Signs (CMS) and Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras on SR-67 for several reasons. Caltrans uses the cameras to verify incidents on the State Highway and Freeway system. Caltrans is also able to accurately manage incidents and traffic based on information gathered from what can be seen from the cameras and post the information on CMS. The cameras are used to verify CMS displays as well as to troubleshoot CMS when needed. The Caltrans CCTV system functions as a live transmission and does not possess recording capabilities. To access live traffic conditions on the State Highway system please access Caltrans QuickMap. It is available on an android application or via the web at http://quickmap.dot.ca.gov/.

14. How can we have Driving Under the Influence (DUI) checkpoints on SR-67?

DUI checkpoints are a law enforcement activity and do not fall under the purview of Caltrans. This question has been referred to our partners at the California Highway Patrol.

15. What if that $7 million was reallocated to adding permanent patrol of 67? There wouldn't be a need for the CCTV cameras.

This funding is designated specifically for safety projects for use by Caltrans.